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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: CONSTITUTENT ASSEMBLY: MAY 8 AFTERNOON SESSION

REF: SAIGON 25025

1. AFTER DECIDING TO POSTPONE FURTHER DEBATE ON ARTICLE 24, CA APPROVED ARTICLES 25 THROUGH 34 WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS. TONE OF DEBATE WAS RESERVED AND REASONABLY CORDIAL. DEPUTY LY QUY CHUNG AND SEVERAL OTHER SOUTHERN RENAISSANCE DEPUTIES, WHO HAD WALKED OUT OF CA AFTER MORNING VOTE ON ARTICLE 24, WERE BACK AT THEIR SEATS. THERE WERE, HOWEVER, ONLY 60 DEPUTIES PRESENT (BARELY A QUORUM). GENERALLY, ATTENDANCE HAS BEEN LOWER DURING DEBATE OF ELECTORAL LAW THAN IT WAS DURING WRITING OF CONSTITUTION.

2. ARTICLE 25 NOW READS AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE ARTICLE 25 (1) THE PRINTING OF BALLOTS FOR ALL CANDIDATES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE SPECIAL COMMISSARIAT FOR ADMINISTRATION. THEY WILL BE PRINTED IN BLACK AND WHITE ACCORDING TO THE ATTACHED MODEL.

(2) ON EACH BALLOT THERE WILL BE PRINTED THE FULL NAME, SYMBOL AND PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PRESIDENTIAL AND VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. UNQUOTE

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3. ARTICLE 26 APPROVED WITH MINOR CHANGES. FOLLOWING SENTENCE SHOULD BE ADDED TO PARAGRAPH 3: "OBSERVERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE AT THE POLLING STATION WHICH THEY ARE OBSERVING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROCEDURES PRESCRIBED BY ARTICLE 6." DEPUTIES ALSO VOTED TO CHANGE TIME AT WHICH POLLS WILL CLOSE FROM 1700 TO 1600. PARAGRAPH 7 AMENDED ACCORDINGLY.

4. ARTICLES 27, 28 AND 29 APPROVED WITHOUT CHANGE.

5. ARTICLE 30 APPROVED WITH FOLLOWING ADDITION TO FIRST PARAGRAPH (UNDERLINED PORTION ADDED):

QUOTE ARTICLE 30. (1) THE COMMITTEE IN CHARGE OF THE POLLING STATION WILL APPOINT FROM AMONG THE VOTERS PRESENT WHO CAN READ AND WRITE A NUMBER WHO WILL COUNT BALLOTS, (BEGIN UNDERLINE) UNDER THE DIRECT OBSERVATION OF CANDIDATES' OBSERVERS. (END UNDERLINE) THEY WILL BE DIVIDED INTO GROUPS OF FOUR PERSONS SITTING AT SEPARATE DESKS. UNQUOTE

6. ARTICLE 31 APPROVED WITHOUT CHANGE.

7. ARTICLE 32 APPROVED WITH MINOR CHANGE. THIRD WORD OF FIRST SENTENCE IN SECOND PARAGRAPH SHOULD BE CHANGED FROM "PROVINCES" TO "VILLAGES".

8. ARTICLE 33 APPROVED WITH ADDITION OF "TEMPORARY" AS FIRST WORD OF SENTENCE.

9. ARTICLE 34 APPROVED WITHOUT CHANGE.

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1. FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN POINTS OF MY TALK WITH GENERAL THIEU ON MAY 9 WHEN I CALLED ON HIM TO INTRODUCE AMBASSADOR LOCKE.

2. THIEU SPOKE ALONG THE SAME GENERAL LINES OF HIS CONVERSATION WITH GENERAL WESTMORELAND MAY 7 REGARDING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. HE AFFIRMED HIS BACKING FOR GENERAL VIEN'S STATEMENT INDICATING THAT THE ARVN WOULD NOT BACK A MILITARY MAN AS ITS CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT.

3. INDISCUSSING THE ELECTIONS THIEU EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR A CIVILIAN PRESIDENT, SOMEONE WHO IS RESPECTED AND HAS THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE, AND THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE A TOP ADMINISTRATOR. WHEN I MENTIONED THE DESIRABILITY OF THE PRESIDENT RECEIVING A RESPECTABLE PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTE, AND SUGGESTED THE DESIRABILITY OF A RUNOFF ELECTION, HE EXPRESSED HIMSELF AS BEING IN AGREEMENT, BUT IT IS MY IMPRESSION THAT HE PROBABLY WILL DO NOTHING SPECIFIC ABOUT THIS ISSUE. HE CONSIDERS THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IS STABILITY FOR THE COUNTRY, AND THE ARMY AND THE GOVERNMENT MUST THEREFORE COOPERATE WITH EACH OTHER. IN ELABORATING ON THIS LATTER POINT HE STATED THAT IN HIS VIEW THE ARMED FORCES SHOULD BE DIVORCED FROM POLITICS BECAUSE A) THIS WOULD MAKE A MORE EFFICIENT MILITARY ORGANIZATION, I.E., PROMOTION WOULD BE BASED ON PROFESSIONAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL GROUNDS AND CORRUPTION WOULD BE REDUCED, AND B) IT IS NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A POLITICAL BASE IN THE COUNTRY SO AS TO COUNTER THE VIET CONG AND THEIR POLITICAL BASE. THIS IS NOT A MILITARY JOB, AND IS SOMETHING THEY ARE INCAPABLE OF DOING. IN THIS CONNECTION HE EXPRESSED HIMSELF AS HIGHLY PLEASED WITH THE STATEMENT OF GENERAL VIEN THAT THE ARMED FORCES HAVE NO CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT AND SAID THAT HE HAD TOLD GENERAL VIEN HE WOULD EXPECT HIM TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON HIS DETERMINATION TO KEEP THE ARMY OUT OF POLITICS AND TO EXERCISE THEIR PROPER ROLE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT AND AS THE STABILIZING ELEMENT IN THE COUNTRY.

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4. ON THE MILITARY SIDE HE EXPRESSED THE CONVICTION THAT WE ARE WINNING, BUT HE FELT THAT PACIFICATION REMAINED THE MOST IMPORTANT TASK. IF IT IS NOT UNDERTAKEN PROPERLY AND CARRIED THROUGH SUCCESSFULLY THE VIET CONG, WHICH IS ALREADY ORGANIZED AS A POLITICAL ENTITY, WILL ENDEAVOR TO TAKE OVER THE GVN FROM WITHIN AND MAY WELL SUCCEED. IN HIS OPINION THE MOST CRITICAL ELEMENT OF THE PACIFICATION PROGRAM IS THE POLITICAL ELEMENT. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS CAN BE SATISFACTORILY HANDLED.

5. IN TALKING ABOUT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CHIEU HOI, THIEU SAID HOI CHANH COME IN BECAUSE EITHER A) THEY LOSE HOPE OR B) THEY ARE NOT REALLY COMMUNIST AND WISH TO RETURN TO THEIR VILLAGES. HE THOUGHT THE RECENT INCREASE IN RALLIERS WAS BECAUSE MILITARY PRESSURE HAD A) CAUSED LOSS OF MORALE AND B) CAUSED GREATER FRAGMENTATION OF MILITARY UNITS, ENABLING GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR ESCAPE, AS SMALL UNITS ARE LESS CONTROLLED THAN LARGE ONES. IN ADDITION, PACIFICATION OF INCREASING NUMBERS OF VILLAGES WOULD OPEN UP POSSIBILITIES FOR RALLIERS TO RETURN TO THEIR OWN VILLAGES ONCE THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN DO SO WITHOUT GREAT RISK OF VIET CONG ACTION OR GVN RETALIATION.

6. IN THIEU'S OPINION MILITARY PRESSURE AND PROGRESS ON PACIFICATION ARE THE KEYS TO DESTROYING VIET CONG HOPE WHICH HANOI TRIES TO BOLSTER WITH STORIES OF MILITARY SUCCESSES AND CLAIMS THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT STICK IT OUT. THIEU BELIEVES THE HANOI LEADERS PROBABLY RECOGNIZE U.S. DETERMINATION BUT EXPLOIT CRITICISM IN THE U.S. AND ELSEWHERE TO MISLEAD THEIR OWN FORCES.

7. THIEU ADDED THAT PACIFICATION WILL REQUIRE NOT ONLY TECHNICIANS IN THE RD TEAMS BUT THE HIGH-LEVEL GUIDANCE OF THE MILITARY, WHO MUST HAVE RESPONSIBILITY, MOTIVATION, AND COMPETENSE. HE SAYS THAT HE CONTINUALLY EXPRESSES THIS FACT TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE ARMED FORCES.

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